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House of Representatives

STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN ED CASE OF HAWAII DECEMBER 13, 2005

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF KOREAN AMERICAN DAY

Mr. Speaker, aloha and annyong ha shimnikka!

I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 487, which supports the goals and ideals of Korean American Day and, in doing so, recognizes the rich history of Korean immigration to our country dating back well over a century now and the broad and deep contributions of Korean Americans to all facets of our diverse American life.

The history of our country's Korean American community is commonly traced to January 13, 1903, when the SS Gaelic arrived in Honolulu Harbor carrying our first immigrants from Korea. The 56 men, 21 women, and 25 children who stepped onto my Hawaii's shores that day marked the beginning of the remarkable Korean cultural thread that has woven itself so deeply and uniquely into our American tapestry.

Today, 1.2 million Americans of Korean ancestry live throughout our Nation, with 41,000 in Hawaii alone. Korean American contributions in our Hawaii, built on the foundation of dedication and sacrifice by their predecessors, have been notable in a plethora of fields, ranging from government, law, finance, technology, medicine, and business, to arts, sports, education, and military service.

As just some examples, Chief Justice Ronald Moon of the Hawaii Supreme Court is the first Korean American in our country to serve on a state supreme court. Others are recipients of the

Hawaii Korean American Foundation's 2005 Light of the Orient Award: Hawaii County Mayor Harry Kim, Honolulu City Councilwoman Ann Kobayashi, community advocates Agnes Rho Chun, Reverend Tongjin Samuel Lee, Frank Min, Evelyn Choi Shon, and Duk Hee Lee Murabayashi. And, of course, our most well-known American of Korean ancestry is professional golfer Michelle Wie.

But what proud father would not take the opportunity as well to highlight his own two favorite Korean Americans: James Kahele Case and David Espenett Case. My sons carry a quarter Korean ethnicity gifted them by their grandmother, Grace Moon, who emigrated to Hawaii from Korea shortly after the Korean War, and so join this great community in the responsibility of bringing forward this great heritage, American style, into the coming generations.

In closing, I thank Congressmen TOM DAVIS, CHARLES RANGEL, MICHAEL CAPUANO, and ED ROYCE, the chief sponsors of this measure, for providing us all with this opportunity to recognize the many contributions of Korean Americans, past, present and future. Kamsamnida to them, and to all Korean Americans, wherever you might be.